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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

YALE CHAPTER

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New Report Reveals Stark Concerns About Academic Freedom at Yale

Yale AAUP Calls for Urgent Action

NEW HAVEN, CT — The Yale University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) today released a report on the state of academic freedom at the University, based on a faculty survey. The report reveals that a substantial portion of Yale faculty perceives a significant deterioration in their ability to teach, research, and express ideas amidst a deeply politicized higher education environment since January 2025.

Out of 177 faculty respondents, close to half reported significant concern about being disciplined by the university for their public engagement. One-fifth indicated that they had been asked by an administrator to change language related to their courses, research, or website. Non-citizen faculty feel profoundly at risk in the present environment, with 70% reporting concern about being deported in connection with their academic work.

These systemic fears have translated into changes in what faculty do. Roughly a third of respondents report that they have avoided potentially controversial topics in lectures. One in five report they have jettisoned scholarship on such topics altogether. Nearly half of faculty say they have stepped back from public engagement. These figures are all higher for untenured faculty, unsurprisingly.

This report paints a clear picture: facing heightened professional risks, and uncertain that leaders will protect academic freedom when tested, Yale faculty are managing risk alone and making changes that narrow what Yale teaches, researches, and communicates to the world. Yale AAUP calls on the University, in response, to take concrete actions to codify academic freedom rights for all faculty, provide more job security for non-tenured faculty, and commit to meaningful faculty governance in pursuit of the University's mission.

“Faculty here, as elsewhere, are dedicated to their research and teaching — and to breakthroughs and insights that can help the public. But when we face threats to our security, our employment, we cannot do our best teaching, public education, and research.”

— *Daniel Martinez HoSang, Professor of American Studies and Political Science*

“When researchers and educators are altering their curricula, abandoning scholarship, and withdrawing from public discourse out of fear of retaliation, the fundamental integrity of higher ed, and the free space of discovery between faculty and students at Yale, is compromised.”

— *Laura Nasrallah, Buckingham Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation, Department of Religious Studies and Yale Divinity School*

“These findings deserve serious consideration from Yale’s administration. Yale’s leadership must take concrete steps to address them, starting with explicit academic freedom commitments in the faculty handbook.”

— *Amy Kapczynski, John Thomas Smith Professor of Law, Yale Law School*

“This report shows that the wider chilling of academic speech we know is happening elsewhere is also happening at Yale. While the Yale administration’s strategy of staying under the radar has kept some funding intact, it has not managed to preserve or otherwise insulate the richness of the educational experience and classroom environment.”

— *Tarren Andrews, Assistant Professor, Program in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and Medieval Studies*

“There has been a lot of talk recently about a decline in public trust in higher ed. One thing missing from that debate is that trust on campus is in jeopardy right too. Without trust that we won’t be disciplined or harassed for our speech, we can’t offer the best education to our students, do our best research, or best contribute to public debate.”

— *Tarren Andrews*

“We are not happy to have to deliver this report, but we see it as our responsibility as educators. And, it creates an opportunity for faculty, students, and administrators to come together and meet the moment. Every school — including Yale — can be honest about the impact that these attacks are having on campus, and provide strong, contractual academic freedom for faculty, which is just one thing it will take to protect excellence in this political environment.”

— *James Bhandary-Alexander, Clinical Lecturer in Law, Yale Law School*

The Yale AAUP faculty survey highlights an escalating national trend; a 2025 survey by the AAUP and the American Association of Colleges and Universities found that approximately one-third of faculty nationwide have witnessed a recent decline in academic freedom.

For further comment and a breakdown of findings, please contact the Yale chapter of the AAUP.

About the American Association of University Professors:

The mission of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is to advance academic freedom and shared governance; to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education; to promote the economic security of faculty, academic professionals, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and all those engaged in teaching and research in higher education; to help the higher education community organize to make our goals a reality; and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good. Founded in 1915, the AAUP has helped to shape American higher education by developing the standards and procedures that maintain quality in education and academic freedom in this country's colleges and universities.

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